

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Japanese stilt-grass

Greetings, and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Invasive species management is an on-going challenge for land managers as there always seem to be new or spreading outbreaks. On a recent afternoon, biologists working at a bog in Henderson County actually experimented with using a shop-vacuum to remove Japanese stilt-grass seeds, sadly to no avail. Also called Nepalese browntop or by its genus name, *microstegium*, in the United States, this Asian plant was first seen in the Knoxville area around 1919, and its suspected it was used as packing material for porcelain.

Although its shallow root system is easily pulled, its high production of small, easily transportable seeds and its high tolerance for shade help make it extremely invasive in the Southern Appalachians, where it's widespread and readily grows in disturbed areas. Its seeds are often carried by water and as a result, it's often found in flood zones. The small seeds are also easy carried in the treads of boots or tires, bringing the plant to area trails and roadsides. Because the plant produces so many seeds, it can quickly dominate an area.

Japanese stiltgrass can be controlled with herbicide, or through repeated pulling. Pulling is most effective before it develops and releases seeds, though it's important to note that the grass creates an early summer crop of seeds hidden in the leaf sheaves.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.